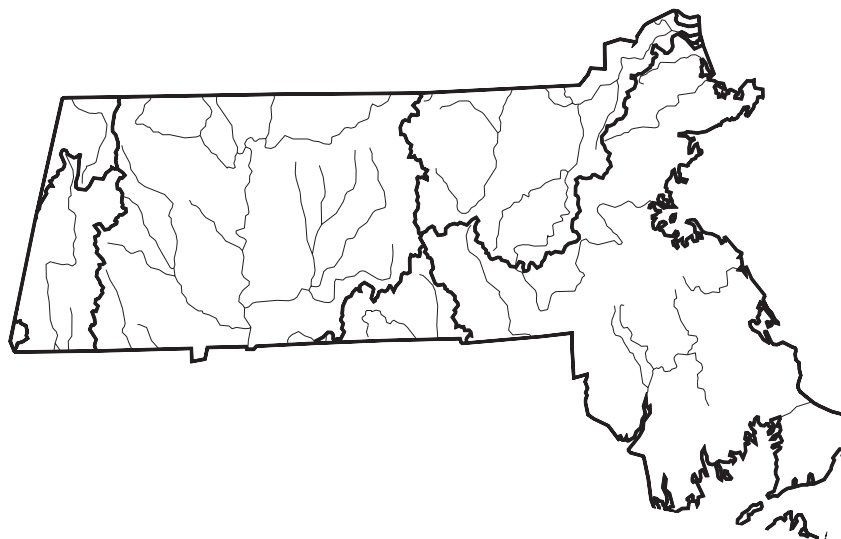


Massachusetts



— Basin Boundaries
(USGS 6-Digit Hydrologic Unit)

For a copy of the Massachusetts
1996 305(b) report, contact:

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Surface Water Quality

Nearly 70% of the 1,369 river miles assessed by Massachusetts now support aquatic life, swimming, and boating uses, although half of the swimmable miles still experience intermittent problems. Twenty-five years ago, swimming and boating in most of these waters would have been unthinkable. The completion of river cleanup will require targeting various sources of pollution, primarily nonpoint source pollution from stormwater runoff and combined sewer overflows, and toxic contamination in sediments (largely historical).

Less than a quarter of the assessed lake acreage supports all beneficial uses. The causes of non-support include introductions of nonnative species, excessive growth of aquatic plants, and excess metals. The sources of these stressors are largely unknown, although non-point sources, including stormwater runoff and onsite wastewater systems, are largely suspected.

Massachusetts' marine waters lag behind its rivers in improvement. Only 27% of the assessed waters fully support all their uses. However, all the major urban areas along the coast either have initiated or are planning cleanup efforts. Foremost among these is a massive project to clean up Boston Harbor.

Ground Water Quality

Contaminants have been detected in at least 206 ground water supply wells in 85 municipalities. Organic chemicals (especially TCE) contaminate 60% of these wells. Other contaminants include metals, chlorides, bacteria, inorganic chemicals, radiation, nutrients, turbidity, and pesticides. Since 1983, Massachusetts has required permits for all industrial discharges into ground waters and sanitary wastewater discharges of 15,000 gallons or more per day. The permits require varying degrees of wastewater treatment based on the quality and use of the receiving ground water. Additional controls are needed to eliminate contamination from septic systems and sludge disposal.

Programs to Restore Water Quality

Wastewater treatment plant construction has resulted in significant improvements in water quality, but \$7 billion of unfunded wastewater needs remain. The Nonpoint Source Control Program has implemented 35 projects to provide technical assistance, implement best management practices, and educate the public. The State has also adopted a combined sewer overflow policy that provides engineering targets for cleanup and is presently addressing several CSO abatement projects.

Programs to Assess Water Quality

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) adopted a watershed planning approach to coordinate stream monitoring with wastewater discharge permitting, water withdrawal permitting, and nonpoint source control on a 5-year rotating schedule. The DEP is also adapting its monitoring strategies to provide information on nonpoint source pollution. For example, DEP will focus more on wet-weather sampling and biological monitoring and less on chemical monitoring during dry periods in order to gain a more complete understanding of the integrity of water resources.

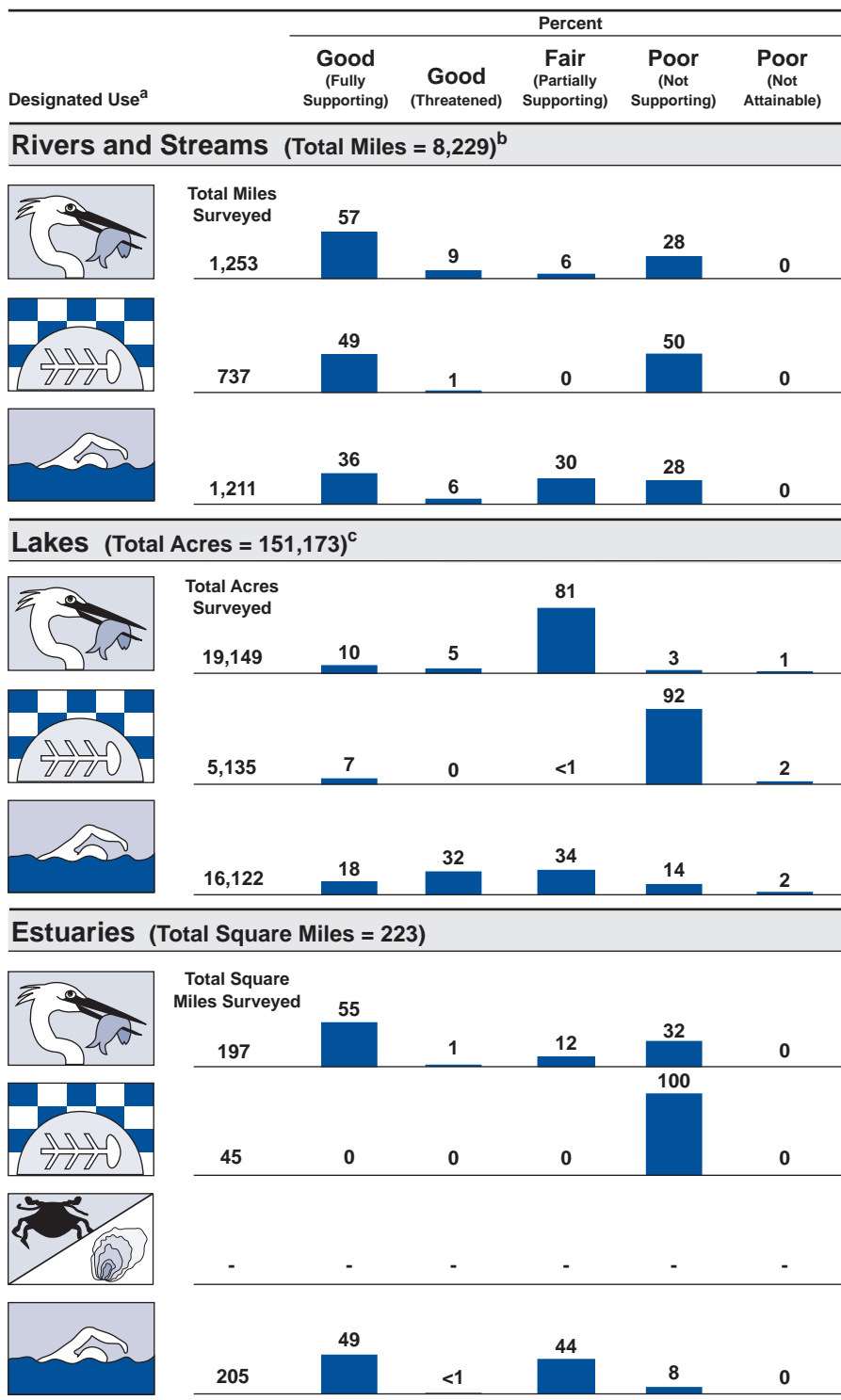
– Not reported in a quantifiable format or unknown.

^a A subset of Massachusetts's designated uses appear in this figure. Refer to the State's 305(b) report for a full description of the State's uses.

^b Includes nonperennial streams that dry up and do not flow all year.

^c Excluding Quabbin Reservoir.

Individual Use Support in Massachusetts



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.